

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

CHANGE LEADERSHIP IN THE U.S. ARMY RESERVE

by

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ABSTRACT

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Organizations require change in order to stay relevant. This challenge is difficult. United States Army Reserve units find change even more daunting as time available to effect change is compressed, when compared to Active Army units. This paper explores change management and how the Reserve must transform in order to remain relevant.

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CHANGE LEADERSHIP IN THE U.S. ARMY RESERVE

"... laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also and keep pace with the times."¹

—Thomas Jefferson

While this quote referred to the changing of the Constitution of the United States, it is just as appropriate for today's United States Army, an Army at war.

War is both a physical reality and a state of mind. War is ambiguous, uncertain, and unfair. When we are at war, we must think and act differently. We become more flexible and more adaptable. We must anticipate the ultimate reality check – combat. We must win both the war and the peace. We must be prepared to question everything. What is best for the Nation? What must endure? What must change?²

Organizations require change in order to stay relevant. This challenge is difficult. United States Army Reserve units find change even more daunting as time available to effect change is compressed when compared to Active Army units.

Change within the Army and the Army Reserve crosses all areas of the DOTMLPF model. Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities are all affected by any change within a single domain. Thus a change in Doctrine impacts Organization; a change in Facilities affects Training. Leaders confront this when preparing a vision statement and recognize the impacts that change has on all they attempt to do. The execution of the vision is the job of the subordinate units and leaders and that is difficult to achieve as change is not a comfortable state for most people.

USAR CHALLENGE

Unit commanders embarking on a two year command tour have an arduous task facing them. Two years by the Reserve calendar is actually 368 hours. This number is arrived at by counting two annual training sessions of 12 days and 22 months of two day weekend drills. In actuality, unit commanders and their soldiers at all levels put in far more time than what they are paid. Focusing on a change leadership plan will allow a commander to maximize training, prepare for mobilization, and create a high performing team.

There is an opportunity for choice here: a commander can spend this precious time "housekeeping" or training for war. Reserve soldiers are committed to two careers. What they

do on drill weekend must be as or more important as what they do on the following Wednesday at their civilian job. Livelihoods depend on what is done in the civilian career. Lives depend on what is done in the Army Reserve. With thirty percent of the Army Reserve end strength already mobilized, it is apparent that business as usual is no longer the case for the Reserve soldier.

Supporting the focus areas of the vision statement of the Chief of Staff, Army there are six major change proposals for the Army Reserve. These are:

- Re-engineer the mobilization process.
- Transform the Army Reserve command and control.
- Remove unready units.
- Implement Human Resources Life Cycle Management.
- Build a rotational base in our force.
- Re-engineer individual capabilities.³

CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE

Some twenty five years ago, an Army General identified seven points necessary to effect change. Even then, he noted that the whole process is greatly facilitated when certain conditions are present. A sense of great danger, a recent military disaster, or a lost war can create situations that enable the proponents of change to gain acceptance among the normally conservative factions of the community. Gaining acceptance of change is necessary to achieve progress but not sufficient to ensure intelligent choice among the options or smooth integration into the military system. To do so there are certain prerequisites.⁴

PREREQUISITES FOR EFFECTING CHANGE

- An institution to identify the need, design the parameters for change, and describe what is to be done.
- A shared educational background among the principal command and staff personalities sufficient to produce a common cultural bias to the solution of problems

and a stable framework within which change may be implemented without disrupting the entire fabric and continuity of the system.

- A spokesman for change; a person, an institution, or a staff agency.
- A process for building consensus that gives the idea a wider audience of converts and believers.
- Continuity among the change agent that achieves consistency of effort.
- Someone at or near the top of an organization willing to become a supporter, or preferably, a champion of proposed change.
- Subjection of the proposed change to trials to identify necessary modifications and to provide convincing demonstrations to a wide audience.⁵

The conditions are present that allow change agents to gain acceptance among the existing organization. The Chief, Army Reserve represents both the spokesman and the champion of change. However, in order for change to occur, leaders at the most senior levels must exhibit the desire to change and a focus on that which adds value to the preparation for the war fight. All other actions are superfluous.

The U.S. Army Reserve is faced with a bureaucracy fraught with a myriad of housekeeping chores to keep it busy. Attempts at leading an organization through change are frustrated and blocked by those who have not yet accepted that we must both mobilize and transform. It is like eating and breathing—you must do both, in order to survive⁶

The U.S. Army Reserve has the prerequisites listed above in hand. The one area that requires emphasis, however, is “A process for building consensus that gives the idea a wider audience of converts and believers.” Right now, the Reserve structure is busy mobilizing and transforming yet it needs time to build consensus. There is an opportunity to gain time and it is called abandonment.

ABANDONMENT

“...80,000 troops of the BEF (British Expeditionary Force) with 30,000 horses, 315 field guns, and 125 machine guns were arriving at Southampton and Portsmouth. Officers' swords had been freshly sharpened in obedience to an order that prescribed sending them to the armorer's shop on the third day of mobilization, although they were never used for anything but saluting on parade.”⁷

In order to avoid the practices of the BEF, leaders must recognize those issues that no longer add value to the accomplishment of the mission. Peter Drucker refers to this as “Organized Abandonment”. The change leader puts every product, every service, every

process, every market, every distribution channel, every customer and end-use on trial for its life. And it does so on a regular schedule. The question has to be asked –and asked seriously- “If we did not do this already, would we, knowing what we now know, go into it?”⁸ Thus, prior to assumption of command, a leader must know the mission, available resources, the environment in which he is to work, and the outcomes that he expects. He must negotiate these with his supervisor. If a task is done to satisfy a requirement of a higher headquarters, or internal to the organization, it is fair game for review, negotiation, and abandonment. Should the leader find that he frequently fails to gain acceptance of abandonment at the next level of command, he should recognize that his change leadership is not supported and reassess his plan. Or his career. This is where the Army Reserve change leader can make a difference within his 368 hour command tenure.

ENVIRONMENT

The vision of the Chief, Army Reserve is clear. For nearly two years LTG Helmly has pressed for true change within his organization. While the message sent is clear, its reception appears to be garbled in reception. For example, the command and control transformation is well on its way. Major headquarters have been renamed and are focused on effecting change in support of the Chief’s vision. However, a review of “The Bulletin”, a twenty page monthly information update from the U.S. Army Reserve 99th Reserve Readiness Command (RRC) revealed sixty four “requirements” to be met by each of its subordinate units. In order for commanders to maximize the time they have and produce mission ready units, many of the aforementioned “requirements” must be abandoned. There are a number of ways to accomplish this.

First, ignore all of it. Concentrate on preparing for the wartime mission or mobilization. Disregard all of the above housekeeping events that do not support unit readiness.

The second option is to focus on mission or mobilization and include, however, those issues that support soldiers such as pay, promotion, discipline, awards, and efficiency reports.

Choosing either of these without coordinating with leadership will result in more training distracters such as Chief of Staff inquiries, inspections, and additional reports on delinquency of reports.

Another way is for that headquarters to build a program of abandonment. Present the concept above: “put every product, every service, every process, every market, every distribution channel, every customer and end-use on trial for its life” and challenge how many of

the sixty four “requirements” survive. At the very least, the result can be an internal abandonment system with a focus each month on a new area.

For example, the 99th RRC Provost Marshal Office (PMO) created four issues of the sixty four. One of the issues is “Monthly Advantor Testing: Ft McCoy, WI has reported monthly IDS testing for the 99th RRC in Oct 03. The rate for the 99th is approximately 60%. The IDS checks are mandatory and are a major deficiency on the Physical Security Inspection if not done. The Ft McCoy inspectors will check the last year for compliance. The PMO will be sending out a monthly spreadsheet to all the centers with IDS status. All centers that have not complied with the check will have to respond back with the explanation. All IDS testing will be conducted the first week of each month.” Each level of command may approach the issue in several ways. In this case, a test has to be made of the alarm system once a month. That is a reasonable thing to do assuming that attention is paid to the system daily and the test does not result in someone noting “system inoperable” until the next monthly test. If the test is successful, a user of the alarm system avoids the spreadsheet and its required explanation. Therefore, it may be resource insignificant to conduct the test.

However, the 99th RRC and “Ft McCoy” should, during their abandonment program look at why “inspectors will check the last year for compliance”. At this point there is nothing that anyone could do to remedy the results of the previous twelve months. This and the 99th RRC report that the testing rate is approximately 60% are not helpful—to the staff, the commanders, and to both units complying and those units failing to comply. The focus of the staff should be to problem solve the issue, not to create reports, statistics, and spreadsheets for the command.

This particular “requirement” occurred in one of the subordinate units of the 99th RRC some years ago. The result of the work done on abandoning this reporting ended up fixing a system that had been neglected. The 1st Brigade, 80th Division was on the spreadsheet every month. In an attempt to comply with the fairly simple requirement, it was determined that the alarm system installed years prior had no one left in the unit who was authorized to conduct the test. The system manager/testing person had a Personal Identification Number (PIN) and only that PIN could be used to conduct the test. He had retired and no one else knew how or was authorized to conduct the test. Coordination was made for a new PIN to be issued to the new building manager and he was tasked to conduct the test every Sunday afternoon of each drill.

That did not help the unit when “Ft McCoy” came to inspect the log for the preceding year. It failed the inspection despite having fixed the problem. Did the working alarm system enhance readiness? Was the resource expenditure benign enough to comply with the “requirement”? Yes to both, but as the example shows, the problem faced in 1998 is still a problem today and

its administrative burden is ripe for abandonment. The energy of the Provost Marshal can be used, on this high level staff, to find out “why” 40% of the units are failing rather than increasing the recordkeeping burden. “Ft McCoy” needs to review the regulation that tasks them to review twelve months of reporting and recording of events that no longer matter. Maybe all it would take is a new PIN.

The U.S. Army Reserve Command Annual Command Training Guidance for Training Years 2004-2006 provides the unit commander the Chief, Army Reserve’s direction for training. In the document, one would expect to see guidance supporting the Chief’s change proposals. Indeed, there is increased emphasis on warrior skills necessary for the soldier to survive and win on the battlefield. The vision is restated and the focus is clear. What is lacking, however, is creating time to conduct this training with its emphasis on war fighting. Granted, six briefings and three training classes are moved to “Pre-Mobilization Training Requirements” but the commander is hard pressed to find the time to do this training with the “requirements” that RRCs still levy. Obviously, someone failed to understand the Chief’s message. In order to do what is required, within the 368 hours a unit commander has in a two year tour, only tasks that support the mission are achievable.

EFFECTING ABANDONMENT

How do organizations effect the abandonment of distracters? Peter Drucker suggests the case where abandonment is the right policy –and the most important one-is the *old* and declining product, service, market, or process for the sake of maintaining which, the *new* and growing product, service or process is being stunted or neglected.⁹ This is the Army Reserve paradigm of today. We have grown comfortable with those issues that support housekeeping or maintenance of the organization. This is clearly the case when a monthly “requirements” list grows to over sixty items to be accomplished in sixteen hours.

VISION

Reserve units should be preparing for mobilization or training for their wartime missions. Since over two-thirds of the soldiers in the U.S. Army Reserve have not mobilized since the Global War on Terrorism began, countless hours are wasted on non-mission tasks. The projected rotations to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo include a heavy reliance on U.S. Army Reserve units. Units should be focused on transforming. The Chief, Army Reserve sent a clear signal when he said, “...we have to transform. This operation we’re currently involved in is living proof of the need to transform our Army. We must be lighter. We must be more agile. We must be speedier to deploy. And operational construct on the battlefield must be lighter. What that

means to the Army Reserve is that we need to fix the mobilization process. We've got to organize, man, train, sustain, mobilize and deploy our units in a vastly different way. And we need to reduce our structure. We're going to reduce our command and control overhead and reduce the number of regional support commands. At the same time, we will be divesting our regional support commands of their base operations, and installation and information management functions--buildings, facilities, grounds, environmental, including paying utility bills, worrying about water and telephone networks, etc. All of that will be placed with the Army Installation Management Agency and NETCOM. And we will be renaming our remaining commands "Regional Readiness Commands" (RRCs) focused intently upon training, mobilizing and kicking Army Reserve units and soldiers out the door."¹⁰ That vision is the trigger, and the license, to abandon all those spreadsheets, reports, replies to reports, and other "requirements" that get in the way of training for war or mobilizing.

In the current model, reserve soldiers report to a local center for monthly training and for two weeks of annual training. The center may have only one unit with a limited amount of equipment. It may be home to a random collection of units stationed there based on little more than availability of space. Typically, the commander has an overwhelming number of administrative tasks—far more than ever encountered by an active commander—that detract from his/her ability to plan and oversee training. In many cases, there is little contact with a doctrinal higher headquarters.¹¹ Renaming commands is the first step. The follow on actions include removing the Cold War processes that kept the organization busy for many years. Then there is innovation.

INNOVATION

With the abandonment of non-value added policy now accepted by all in the Reserve, innovative changes can be effected. There are three possible outcomes of an innovation. All of them have unpleasant consequences even when the change is successful. A successful innovation makes current methods of doing things obsolete. It changes the old patterns and makes people uncomfortable, especially those with the most psychic capital invested in the old way. Since those with the most invested tend to be in control, there is a strong incentive to resist change. Second, the innovation may be a failure. Finally, it may work but with unforeseen consequences and new problems.¹² Particular attention must be given to the full time staff as they will interface with the higher headquarters on the "requirements" found to be distracters. Those distracters are what kept the headquarters in business for many years. Some will feel uncomfortable in abandoning their work. Some will retaliate in order to maintain their status

quo. Both groups are wrong and missed their leader's vision. Leaders must be in contact with full time staff to ensure that the pressure they get from encountering resistance to the change innovation creates does not negatively affect them.

STRUCTURE

For most individuals in an organization, just getting through the day is trying enough. Asking them to be a part of the learning atmosphere in their organization that will help make sense of their future may be overwhelming. In fact, many may yearn for the days of bureaucratic gridlock as compared to the seemingly free-for-all existence in the Information Age.¹³ With high performing teams effecting change within their own units, adhering to the vision of the leader of the Army Reserve, change can take place in moribund headquarters and time created for the true mission of the U.S. Army Reserve: organize, man, train, sustain, mobilize and deploy our units.

To do this, a hard look at both force structure and infrastructure is in order. First, it is unrealistic to expect an Army Reserve unit to be manned with specialists in a military skill, based simply on their geographic proximity to a Reserve center. Reserve soldiers do not, for the most part, locate their residence based on their Reserve assignment. While there may be serendipity in some cases, i.e., a transportation unit located near a trucking company terminal, the norm is that Reserve soldiers travel to get to a unit that accepts their skill and grade. It is in the best interest of the soldier, his family and employer, and the Reserve to recognize this and minimize the distracters on training time. To this end, the era of the weekend drill must end. Rather than eleven months where a soldier travels to his Reserve center for a Saturday and Sunday, an alternative would be the soldier travels to training once every three months for Saturday through Friday. The soldier is with his unit for training for the same number of hours but the administrative burdens are reduced by two-thirds. Commanders can schedule realistic training over several days and avoid the compressed training schedule syndrome where lunch accounts for nearly twenty percent of the drill weekend. Employers could adapt to the new training cycle and not have a concern that their employee is off on Army training once a month. The planned absence is palatable and the employee does not show up exhausted after a drill weekend. Families would miss weekends with their soldier three times a year instead of eleven. The actual contact hours would decrease by eight hours over the training year but the administrative burden of pay actions and accountability would free additional time where realistic training could take place. Facilities such as identification card sections, vehicle registration, post office, medical services, and supply functions normally unavailable to the

Reserve commander and his soldiers on a weekend would be accessible and actually assist in building the perception that there is only one Army.

Proposals to support this training plan must include funding for soldier travel, lodging, and payment for meals.¹⁴ Legislation already exists for the payment of lodging for soldiers traveling over fifty miles to their Reserve centers. The mileage reimbursement should be funded but may be a non-issue as many Reservists already endure this expense out of pocket. The extended drill period coupled with a lodging reimbursement would reduce the number of trips required to the center from eleven to three annually. By abolishing the convoluted and expensive catering of meals during a drill weekend, the cost avoidance would more than pay for the separate rations payment for each soldier. It would also free up soldiers in the food service field from spending their training days mastering forms and contracts for food service support that have nothing to do with war time food service operations and everything to do with fueling the headquarters bureaucracy.

In addition, that center may have undergone a number of transitions with its tenant units over the years. The physical structure could have been designed for a unit whose existence is now a distant memory. Thus, we have soldiers traveling great distances to facilities that are not designed to facilitate their training. Two Army Reserve officers propose Regional Training Centers (RTC). Rather than adapt to the building because it is available, the Reserve could create training facilities based on collocation of functionally and doctrinally related units. The RTC would also provide better connections to the doctrinal base, enhanced effectiveness of distance learning, more efficient training for the Reserve Components (RC) and Active Component (AC) soldiers and a means of promoting joint training, integration of AC and RC soldiers into joint training greatly enhances the quality of training for everyone.

Reducing the number of training centers will result in several economies of scale, including building costs, full time staffs, and administrative support. A small number of centers will facilitate administrative support and holding company concepts already proposed by the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve.¹⁵

The AC mission commanders have given away the installation management function to an agency whose sole focus is managing the infrastructure. The Installation Management Agency (IMA) mission is: *Provide equitable, effective and efficient management of Army installations worldwide to support mission readiness and execution, enable the well-being of soldiers, civilians and family members, improve infrastructure, and preserve the environment.*¹⁶ Offering up the Reserve centers to the Agency would allow the RRCs to focus on Reserve missions. There is no reason that the Reserve must own the processes and even the utilities to run the

buildings where subordinate units train. By shedding the “housekeeping” tasks, the Army Reserve can focus on its core competencies. Further, it frees up the staff and money formally allotted to running the facilities and eliminates other training distracters. This is probably the greatest example of abandonment that the Armed Forces of the United States could ever achieve. As the IMA is already managing the property and systems of the AC, there will be economies of scale that the RRCs could never achieve. As the Agency matures, it is growing into other areas of support including centralized contract support for items such as vehicles, cellular telephones, and trash removal. Vendors are excited about large accounts with centralized billing and offer better rates to IMA than the individual centers could ever achieve. The cost avoidance from abandoning these functions could in fact pay for some of the other innovations that are proposed above. The Chief, Army Reserve sold the Army on his initiatives by forecasting that he would not need additional funding. Leveraging the IMA is in keeping with his ideas and supports the personnel side of his paradigm change as well.

Ironically, one of the RRCs has developed an organization model to manage the various Reserve centers under its command. It is identical to an Institutional Training Division Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) that already exists within the RRC and is surplus to the Army Reserve mission. This is an example of the communicated vision not being received or the organization failing to accept it. Further, it is an example of where units cannot accept the possibility of abandonment and actually create new missions in which to morph their assets. The model not only matched the TDA but it included occupations that are in dreadfully short supply. Over 350 soldiers were used to create a structure that fails to follow the intent of the senior leader of the organization and actually works at cross purposes with the result he expects. Implementation of this model would have second and third order effects on the Army Reserve that would exasperate already chronic personnel shortages. It would place personnel needed for the Global War on Terrorism rotations into management positions that do not deploy. Thus, the skill set needed by the war fighter is siphoned off into a staff position where it is underutilized. This is exactly opposite of LTG Helmly’s intent. Hopefully, the Installation Management Agency will own the process and the proposed TDA will never see the light of day.

This begs a greater question. What caused that staff to prepare a TDA that maintained the status quo in an era of change? Perhaps the answer lies in span of control. Organizations are used in part to receiving resources based on the number of subordinate units under their control. A reduction in the headcount of an agency would threaten the position of those remaining in the agency. A Major General needs several Brigadier Generals subordinate to him in order to maintain his span of control. Brigadiers need many Colonels to justify their positions.

On the civilian staff side, position relates to pay which relates to the number of people supervised. By creating a new organization, subordinate to the RRC, the pay grades are protected and both civilian and military positions remain intact. The environment created in the Army Reserve must challenge this premise if change is to succeed. The mission should drive the organizational structure. If the responsible command level is Major General, then that position is validated regardless of the number of authorized positions. In the future, leveraging people and technology, we may see small units led by very senior leaders doing impressive things. Breaking this paradigm is not all that unusual. In fact, the Special Operations community frequently puts senior personnel in charge of small units and expects (and gets) tremendous results. Considering the background of the current Chief of Staff, Army we would do well to remember this when making changes in the Organization, Personnel, and Leadership domains.

CONCLUSION

With the organized abandonment of those issues that formerly distracted units from their missions, divestiture of the unnecessary infrastructure, and a new paradigm for training sessions, time is now freed up to allow for hard, realistic training. Soldiers are in synch with the vision of General Helmly, commanders at all levels, and the National Security Strategy. The U.S. Army Reserve will organize, man, train, sustain, mobilize and deploy, prepared for war and contributing as they have in the past.

WORD COUNT= 4609

ENDNOTES

¹ Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Memorial Edition* (Washington, D.C., 1903-04), ME 15:40

² Peter J. Schoomaker, DoD Press Release-- Arrival Message, 1 August 2003. Available from <http://www.army.mil/leaders/csa/messages/1aug03.htm>. Internet. Accessed 16 February 2004.

³ Wanda L. Good, "Army Reserve Strategic Human Resources and Readiness Transformation Initiatives". Briefing slides with scripted commentary. Arlington, VA: Office of the Chief, Army Reserve, 5 May 2003.

⁴ David S. Blodgett, *What Change Can Do For An Army*, (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS., 1986), 23.

⁵ Donn A. Starry, "To Change An Army", *Military Review* (March 1983): 21-28.

⁶ James R. Helmly, "Transforming While Mobilizing". Available from http://www4.army.mil/USAR/news/f-force_01.php. Internet. Accessed 16 February 2004.

⁷ Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, (The MacMillian Company New York, N.Y., 1962), 78.

⁸ Peter F. Drucker, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* (New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins, 1999), 74.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Helmly, 3.

¹¹ Gary Howard and Gregory K. Johnson, "Army Reserve Regional Training Centers", *ARMY*, March 2004, 14.

¹² Lyle E. Schaller, *The Change Agent*, (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1972), 54.

¹³ Robert M. Murphy, *Managing Strategic Change: An Executive Overview of Management*. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2001), 35.

¹⁴ Howard and Johnson, 16.

¹⁵ Howard and Johnson, 15.

¹⁶ Anders B. Aadland, "Mission Statement". Available from <http://www.ima.army.mil/mission.asp>. Internet, accessed 16 March 2004.

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